

## **CAPSULE SUMMARY**

**BA-1066**

**417 Railroad Avenue**

**East Towson, Baltimore County**

**Circa 1900**

**Private**

The dwelling at 417 Railroad Avenue was constructed circa 1900 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. The history of East Towson dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures.

This single-family vernacular dwelling is sited on a level grassy lot with a gravel driveway and is surrounded with mature shrubs. It is two stories in height with a front gable roof and an elongated rectangular footprint, which fronts close to the road. It sits on a solid poured concrete foundation. It is two bays wide, similar in form to shotgun houses, and a one-story shed roof porch covers the full-width of the façade. Marble block steps lead to the porch, which is supported with wood square posts and a replacement iron balustrade. The façade features a single-leaf replacement three-light two-panel wood door and 1/1 double-hung vinyl sash replacement windows. The northeast elevation has three 1/1 double-hung vinyl sash windows on both the first and second stories. A non-historic shed roof porch is located on the rear elevation. To the rear of this dwelling is a circa 1950 single-family dwelling. It is one story in height, with a side gable roof, and is two bays wide. The west elevation has a gable addition. The entire house is clad with vinyl siding, and sits on a poured concrete foundation. A circa 1980 prefabricated shed is associated with this property.

Inventory No. BA- 1066

### 1. Name of Property

(indicate preferred name)

## historic

other

## 2. Location

street and number 417 Railroad Avenue \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town      Baltimore      \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity

county Baltimore County

### 3. Owner of Property

(give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name	Hattie Genevieve Cooper
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street and number 414 Railroad Avenue

telephone	Not Available
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city, town	Baltimore
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state MD

zip code 21286-5411

#### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse liber 3736 folio 335

city, town	Towson	tax map	70A	tax parcel	226	tax ID number	914652260
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## 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
☐ Other:

## 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource Count	
_____ district	_____ public	_____ agriculture	_____ landscape	Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  X  </u> building(s)	<u>  X  </u> private	_____ commerce/trade	_____ recreation/culture	<u>      1      </u>	_____ buildings
_____ structure	_____ both	_____ defense	_____ religion	_____	_____ sites
_____ site		<u>  X  </u> domestic	_____ social	_____	_____ structures
_____ object		_____ education	_____ transportation	_____	_____ objects
		_____ funerary	_____ work in progress	<u>      1      </u>	_____ Total
		_____ government	_____ unknown		
		_____ health care	_____ vacant/not in use		
		_____ industry	_____ other:		
				<b>Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory</b>	
				<u>      1      </u>	

## 7. Description

Inventory No. BA- 1066

### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Constructed circa 1900, this single-family vernacular dwelling is sited on a level grassy lot with a gravel driveway and is surrounded with mature shrubs. It is two stories in height with a front gable roof and an elongated rectangular footprint, which fronts close to the road. It sits on a solid poured concrete foundation. It is two bays wide, similar in form to shotgun houses, and a one-story shed roof porch covers the full-width of the façade. Marble block steps lead to the porch, which is supported with wood square posts and a replacement iron balustrade. The façade features a single-leaf replacement three-light two-panel wood door and 1/1 double-hung vinyl sash replacement windows. The northeast elevation has three 1/1 double-hung vinyl sash windows on both the first and second stories. A non-historic shed roof porch is located on the rear elevation. To the rear of this dwelling is a circa 1950 single-family dwelling. It is one-story in height, with a side gable roof, and is two bays wide. The west elevation has a gable addition. The entire house is clad with vinyl siding, and sits on a poured concrete foundation. A circa 1980 shed is associated with this property. It is clad with pressed vertical board and features a gambrel roof.

## 8. Significance

Inventory No. BA- 1066

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

**Specific dates** 1900 ca. **Architect/Builder** Unknown

**Construction dates** 1900 ca.

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

The house at 417 Railroad Avenue was constructed circa 1900 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. East Towson is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, specifically the pre-Civil War development of an African-American neighborhood in a predominately white community. The history of this property dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures. Many of the current homeowners and tenants living in the neighborhood are descendents of the first African-American residents.

East Towson as a whole is representative of an important phase of architectural development in Baltimore County, illustrating the dilution of popular architectural styles to more efficiently meet the needs of the neighborhood, and the builders' untrained abilities to execute the fashionable ornamentation. Thus, East Towson provided lower cost housing in a more suburban neighborhood, rather than the urban setting their economic status typically perpetuated.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA- 1066

*Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland.* Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.

Baltimore County Historic Inventory.

Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. *A History of Baltimore County.* Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.

*Map of Baltimore County.* Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.

Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men.* Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.

Sidney, J. C. *Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys.* Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .07 Acre  
Acreage of historical setting Unknown  
Quadrangle name Towson

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The dwelling is located at 417 Railroad Avenue in East Towson in the Ninth District of Baltimore County. It has historically been associated with Tax Map 70A, Parcel 226 since its construction circa 1900.

## 11. Form Prepared by

name/title	J. Bunting, K. Baynard, R. Weidlich, Architectural Historians		
organization	EHT Tracerics, Incorporated	date	November 28, 2001
street & number	1121 5th Street NW	telephone	202.393.1199
city or town	Washington	state	DC

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCD/DHCP  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600



# East Towson: Planimetric Data



Prepared by:  
Baltimore County Office of Planning  
401 Bosley Avenue  
Towson, Maryland 21204  
June, 2001



Scale  
1 inch = 200 feet  
1:2400  
100 0 100 200 Feet

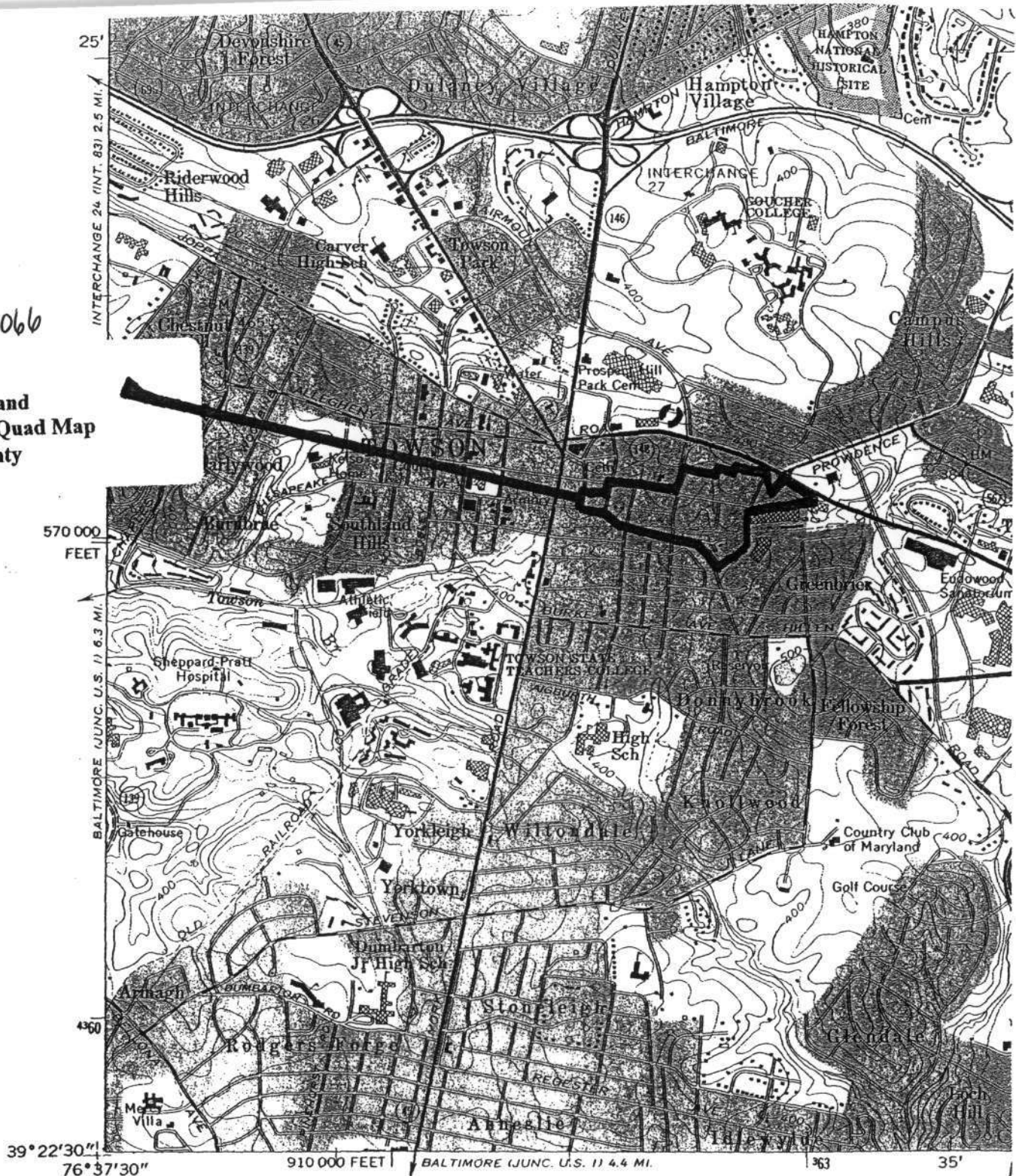
## Legend

- |                           |                     |                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Paved Roads               | Study Area Boundary | Hydrographic Features |
| Unpaved Roads             | Buildings           | Vegetation            |
| Paved Parking / Driveways |                     |                       |

Data Sources:  
Planimetric Data: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)  
Parcel Boundaries: Baltimore County OIT GIS Services Unit (1:2400)  
Study Area: Baltimore County Office of Planning (1:2400)  
Coordinate System:  
Maryland State Plane: NAD83/91 Horizontal Datum  
Elevations in Feet: NAVD86 Vertical Datum  
Date of Data Capture: March 1996  
Scale of Data Capture: 1" = 100'

BA-1066

East Towson  
Towson, Maryland  
Towson USGS Quad Map  
Baltimore County



(BALTIMORE WEST)  
5562' SW

Mapped by the Army Map Service  
Edited and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Maryland  
Bureau of Control Surveys and Maps

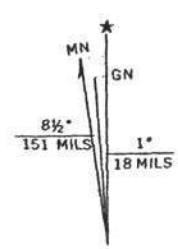
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs  
taken 1943. Topography by planetable surveys 1944  
Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1957

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Maryland coordinate system  
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 18, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only  
landmark buildings are shown

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from  
aerial photographs taken 1966 and 1974. This information not  
field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET





BA-1066

HOUSE, 417 RAILROAD AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPO

NORTHEAST CORNER

1 of 4



BA-1066  
HOUSE, 417 RAILROAD AVENUE  
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD  
TRAILERIES

10/2001  
MD-SHPD  
SOUTHEAST CORNER

2 of 4



BA-1066

HOUSE, 417 RAILROAD AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRAILERIES

10/2001

MD-SHPD

WEST ELEVATION

3 of 4





BA-1066  
HOUSE, 418 RAILROAD AVENUE  
BALTIMORE COUNTY. MD  
TRALERIES  
10/2001  
MD-SHPD  
EAST ELEVATION

4 of 4

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Hattie Norris House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER 417 E. Pennsylvania Ave. second

CITY, TOWN Towson Md. 21204 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE VICINITY OF Baltimore

COUNTY

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Hattie G. Norris

Telephone #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER 417 Railroad Ave.

CITY, TOWN Towson Md. 21204 STATE, zip code

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Baltimore County Courthouse

Liber #: 3736/335

Folio #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER

401 Bosley Ave

CITY, TOWN

Towson Md. 21204

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

BA-1066 - 417 Railroad

before 1915

This long, narrow frame house is two bays wide, three bays deep and two stories high. A porch runs across the street-facing gable end.

**7 DESCRIPTION****CONDITION**

☒ EXCELLENT  
☐ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

**CHECK ONE**

☒ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

**CHECK ONE**

☐ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

417 RR Ave.

This long, narrow two-story frame house was built before 1915. Its eastern gable end faces the street. The house is two short bays wide by three long bays deep. The southern bay on the east facade contains a door. The other bays on both floors of the east and north sides are occupied by 1/1 sash windows. Two small windows appear on the first floor at the west end of the south side. Porches crossing the east and west ends have shed roofs supported by thin square posts. The house is presently covered with tan aluminum siding.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

BA-1066

### PERIOD

☐ PREHISTORIC  
☐ 1400-1499  
☐ 1500-1599  
☐ 1600-1699  
☐ 1700-1799  
☐ 1800-1899  
☐ 1900-

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  
☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC  
☐ AGRICULTURE  
☐ ARCHITECTURE  
☐ ART  
☐ COMMERCE  
☐ COMMUNICATIONS

### AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING  
☐ CONSERVATION  
☐ ECONOMICS  
☐ EDUCATION  
☐ ENGINEERING  
☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT  
☐ INDUSTRY  
☐ INVENTION

☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
☐ LAW  
☐ LITERATURE  
☐ MILITARY  
☐ MUSIC  
☐ PHILOSOPHY  
☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

☐ RELIGION  
☐ SCIENCE  
☐ SCULPTURE  
☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN  
☐ THEATER  
☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

### SPECIFIC DATES

### BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This house according to land records was owned by a private family until around 1940 when the property was conveyed to Strawman Inc. Strawman Inc. controlled the property until it was sold to Hattie M. Norris in 1960.

This property illustrates the attractiveness of property situated in a community faced with the pressures of commercial development.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY



**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Marcus Pollock/coordinator Merry Stinson/architect 7/11/77

ORGANIZATION

Committee to Save E. Towson/Towson Ymca

DATE

823-8870

STREET &amp; NUMBER

600 W. Chesapeake Ave.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Towson Md.

STATE

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RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438



BA-1066

Hattie G. Norris House

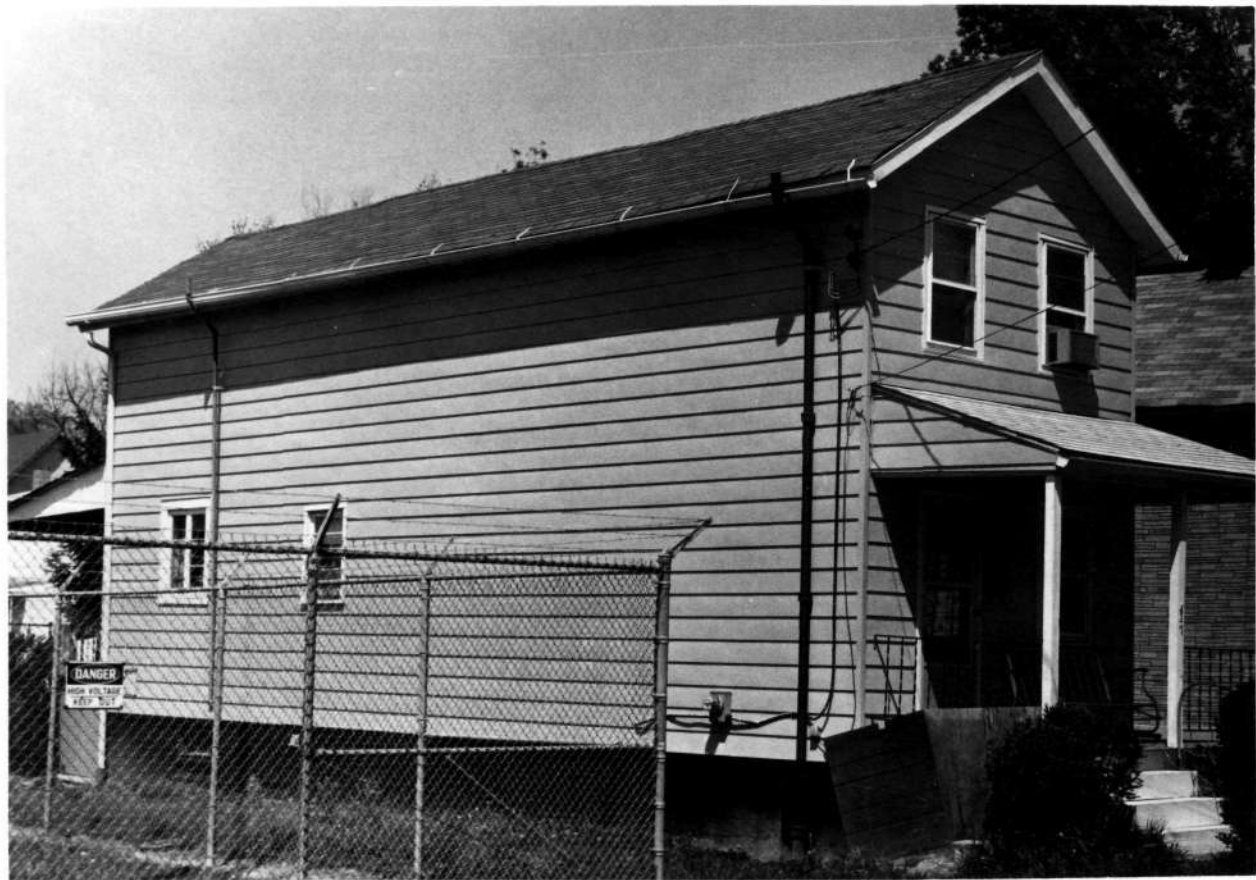
417 R.R. Ave.

Towson, Md.

Northeast

Merry Stinson

1977



BA-1066  
Hattie G. Norris House  
417 R.R. Ave.  
Towson, Md.  
Southeast

Merry Stinson  
1977